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| Mahjong  Mahjong (Chinese: 麻將; Pinyin: májiàng) is a traditional Chinese game for two to four players, though mostly  played by four players. |  |
| Sometimes it is played as a gambling game. Tactics, observation and memory are required for mahjong games. A mahjong game may contain 136, 144, 148 or 152 tiles, the most common being 136 and 144. The tiles are grouped into Suits (consisting of Dot- or Circle tiles, Bamboo tiles and Character tiles) Honour  (consisting of Wind tiles and Dragon Tiles) and Flower (consisting of Flower tiles and Seasonal tiles). A set of 144 Mahjong tiles consists of 36 tiles in the Dot/ Circle suit, 36 in the Bamboo suit, 36 in the Character suit,  16 Wind tiles, 12 Dragon tiles and 8 bonus tiles (4 Flowers and 4 Seasons).  Players are seated around a squared table, signifying the four directions East, South, West, North.  AIM OF THE GAME One receives either thirteen or sixteen tiles for a hand (depending on the variation being played), remaining tiles  are placed in the middle. When ones turn comes, one draws a tile and discards one. The goal is to make four “melds”  (certain set of tiles) and an identical pair of any suit, or "head". (Note that a winning hand contains fourteen tiles.  One wins by drawing a tile that completes your hand, or of someone else's discard.)  SYMBOLISM IN MAHJONG TILES  SUIT The Suits of the tiles (Dot/ Circle, Character, Bamboo) are money-based. In ancient China, the copper [coins](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/yuanbao.htm) had  a square hole in the centre. People passed a rope through the holes to tie coins into strings. These strings are  usually in groups of 100 coins (called diao) or 1000 coins (called guan).  DOT/ CIRCLE Each tile consists of a number of circles, each circle represents one copper coin.  CHARACTERS Named as each tile represents ten thousand coins, or one hundred strings of one hundred coins.  BAMBOO Named as each tile (except the Bamboo 1 which has a [bird](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/animals_symbolism.htm) sitting on a [bamboo](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/flowers_symbolism.htm)) consists of a number of bamboo  sticks. Each stick is said to represent a string that holds a hundred coins.  HONOUR TILES WIND  A further category of tiles would be the four Honour tiles, each representing one direction, namely East, South,  West and North.  DRAGON Dragon tiles: red, green, and white.  It is said that the three dragon tiles represent the Cardinal Virtues bequeathed by Confucius: red- benevolence,  green- sincerity, white- filial piety. The term dragon tile is a western convention introduced by Joseph Park Babcock in his 1920 book introducing  Mahjong to America. Originally, these tiles are said to have something to do with the Chinese Imperial Examination.  The red tile means you pass the examination and thus will be appointed a government official. The green tile means,  consequently you will become financially well off. The white tile means that because a person is doing well they  should act like a good, incorruptible official. It usually has a blue border to distinguish from replacement tiles and  prevent players from secretly adding lines to effect a victory.   FLOWER TILES FLOWER Flower tiles are typically optional components to a set of mahjong tiles, these tiles often contain artwork on their  tiles. Many people prefer not to use these tiles due to the fact that they make it easier to win and earn bonus  points. For example, if you have no flowers in your hand you get 1 bonus point.  Typical flower tiles represent ume plum (梅), orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo.  SEASONAL Seasonal tiles representing spring, summer, autumn, and winter.  Note: Characters shown on the picture are Dragon, Flower, Dots/ Circles, Character, Bamboo (left- right, top  upper corner- bottom)  Mahjong tiles |  |